



Town of Warren, Rhode Island

Minutes of the Economic Development Board

The Town of Warren, RI Economic Development Board met at a Regular Meeting on May 24, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall, located at 514 Main Street. Board Members present included Sara Volino, Paula Silva, Davison Bolster, Karen Dionne, Brandt Heckert, Linda Brunini, and Diane Horton. Kristin MacDonald was present at the meeting to serve as Secretary to the EDB. Town Council member Cathie Tattrie was present. Ex Officio member Caroline Wells was not present. Sam Shamoon was present at the meeting to discuss the Warren Comprehensive Plan.

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m.

1. Review and Approval of Minutes from the Regular Meeting on April 19, 2010

The minutes from the regular meeting held on April 19, 2010 were reviewed by the members via email. A motion was made by Ms. Silva to accept the minutes, Mr. Heckert seconded the motion, and all members were in favor.

2. Update on Downtown Banner Project

The banner committee updated the Board on the progress of the downtown banners. Ms. Silva reported that the committee had quotes of \$150.00 for 30"X60" double sided banners, not including hardware. The committee plans to invest in three banners to hang from utility poles along Main Street. Ms. Silva reported that National Grid granted permission to access the utility poles. The first banner would be placed on the east side of Main Street close to the Bristol border, the second banner is to be located downtown, and the third banner would be located near the bridge on the border of Barrington. Ms. Silva, Ms. Dionne, and Ms. Brunini were in the process of finalizing a design and choosing a printer for the banners. Ms. Volino advised the committee to make the final decisions and finish the project; no further approval is required by the Board to complete the project.

3. Update on Comprehensive Plan

Sam Shamoon was present to discuss changes to the Economic Development section of the Warren Comprehensive Plan which he has made in cooperation with the EDB. The Board further discussed several issues pertaining to this section of the Comprehensive Plan, including incentive programs to phase out non-conforming signage and bill boards,

as well as changes in zoning for fencing, which would improve the overall appearance of the community. Mr. Bolster suggested that the language in the “Policies and Actions” section needed to be more active in order to truly implement change. Ms. Tattrie stated that too many open mandates that are not completed in the Comprehensive Plan can be a potential legal liability to the Town; she suggested that the Board prioritize actions. Mr. Heckert suggested that Mr. Shamoon build a disclaimer into the Plan to protect the Town regarding the availability of funds and the projected timeframe for actions to be completed. Mr. Shamoon stated he would incorporate these suggestions into his revision of the document. The Board agreed to meet with Mr. Shamoon on Monday, June 7, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. to further review changes to the Comprehensive Plan.

4. Update on guide to opening a business in Warren

Mr. Heckert presented the Board with a brochure entitled “A Guide to Starting a Business in Warren: Understanding the Permit and Procedure Process”, which will be available at Town Hall through the Department of Planning and Zoning. It will serve to streamline the business permit and license procedure for people seeking to open or expand a business in Warren. Ms. Tattrie suggested that the Business Guide brochure could also be distributed by the East Bay Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Dionne will complete final design changes to the brochure.

5. Update on Warren Arts Program

Ms. Horton presented the Board with an outline of the goals of the Warren Arts Committee. The first phase of the plan includes renovations to Town Hall. The suggested renovations would include: front entry signage, fresh paint and wallpaper, and improvements and restoration of interior spaces. The improved lobby interior would be used as gallery space for Warren artists. Ms. Horton stated that the plans for the first phase were forwarded to Mr. Frerichs; the next step is to coordinate a meeting with the Department of Public Works. The Board discussed potential grant opportunities to fund the arts program.

6. Update and Discussion on Town Council Action on EDB (Tattrie)

This item was continued from the previous EDB meeting; Ms. Tattrie was present to discuss a Town Council agenda item from April which concerned the role of the EDB. Ms. Tattrie stated that she had asked the council to step up and take responsibility for defining the role of the EDB. The purpose of presenting the agenda item was not intended as a criticism of the EDB, but to get feedback from the Town Council. In response, the Board agreed to present a report on current progress and future goals to Town Council on July 13th, 2010. Ms. Volino stated she would send a request to the Town Clerk to get on the meeting agenda for the July.

The Board discussed ways to reach out to business owners; Mr. Bolster suggested that the EDB could host a workshop for business owners. Mr. Bolster made a motion to schedule an economic development forum for local business people for the fall, Ms. Horton seconded the motion, and all members were in favor.

.

7. New Business

Mr. Bolster asked the Board for an opinion on 12 inch and 14 inch parking signs; the Board favored the 12 inch parking sign. Mr. Bolster briefly discussed the process of moving ahead with the signs and the process of reaching a consensus on parking time limits.

Given the time, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:28 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristin M. MacDonald

*Minutes submitted by Kristin MacDonald
June 19, 2010*

Given the time, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristin M. MacDonald

*Minutes submitted by Kristin MacDonald
May 20, 2010*